2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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611 The Maltese have large families and reckon kin relationship equally through males and females. Each person is thus at the centre of a wide network of cognates and affines. All these relatives do not have equal importance; a person normally makes a distinction between his immediate family (*qraba tal-familja*), his close relatives (*qraba ta' gewwa*) and his distant relatives (*qraba fil-bogħod*). A man's immediate family consists of his parents and his siblings and their fiancées, wives and children. This set of relatives normally sees each other at least once a week, and would be invited for a baptismal or betrothal celebration. The close relatives usually include grandparents, parents' siblings and their wives and children – his first cousins. These relatives all expect to be invited to a wedding, if not to a baptism. If they live in different villages they will also exchange visits during their annual festas. Distant relatives include the siblings of grandparents and great-grandparents and their descendants. A person normally has no formal contact with this set, but he recognizes his relationship to them if it is known to him.

Upon marriage, a person extends the range of his immediate family to include the corresponding set of his spouse. He may meet more frequently with his wife's immediate family than with his own, especially if they live equidistant from both sets (or in his wife's village).

It should be noted, however, that these sets of kin are not fixed or bounded groups; a person is relatively free to invite whom he wishes to any given ceremony. Physical as well as genealogical distance combines with sentiment to determine the actual relatives who are placed in these rough categories by an individual. Thus a person may be on closer terms with a second cousin who lives next door than with a first cousin living in another village. Normally, however, certain relatives *expect* to be invited to particular ceremonies, and failure to do so leads to friction, or may be a reflection of an existing conflict. Thus, while a first cousin does not expect to be invited to a baptismal or betrothal party, he does expect an invitation to a wedding. A second cousin does not expect to be invited to either, although he often is. These sets of kin relations are thus flexible; long dormant links can be manipulated for special purposes, such as to arrange introductions to

565 The landed classes in Malta and particularly the nobility have never taken any considerable part in the communal life of the villages in which they maintain their country seats and draw rents from the lands which they own. They have always been more urban than rural and more European than Maltese. [793] A squirearchy on the English pattern has been lacking, and the functions which, in the English village, fell to the squire have, in Malta, come within the wide range of activities of the Parish Priest.

621 795 565 Apart from the clergy[10] and the gentry, the greater part of the population of the traditional village in Malta was made up of the peasantry deriving their livelihood directly or indirectly from the land or in some cases the sea. Within this section of the community homogeneity was the keynote. There was one Church. All the populace were Church members and attended the same services at the same times each day of every week. [203] The Church could therefore be the centre of diffusion of news to the villagers - both relating to farming and to general affairs in and out of the village.

621 565 241 423 [611] [591] Within the village the peasant and his family, patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal, worked the few tmien of land held on rent or lease: rarely was much of it owned by the cultivator. The work of the farm and of the household went on as a single unit (Section 2). The two were often located within the same cluster of buildings (Case VI,v. Plan). Clearly some farmers were richer than others, some had more land, some more animals, but accepted stratification within the village went no further than this: there was no middle class between priest and farmer.

628 197 For the peasant, the bounds of his regular experience were the limits of the village. Contact between villages, even where close together, was slight and invariably less than that between the individual village and Valletta. Evidence of this is found in the dialect differences between villages but equally illuminating is the fact that the basic dialect distinction that can be made is that between the Urban area, with its Italianized vocabulary and intonation, and the rural parts of the Islands with their characteristically broader vowels, harsher gutterals and fewer European words and idioms (B/Aquilina,J). Language is but one aspect of rural culture in the Maltese Islands which reveals the essential independence of the village within the traditional rural scene. Village patriotism is expressed in inter-Parish rivalry and in a variety of regional reputations, proverbs, and local lore. 628 186 [794] Thus the shrewdness of the inhabitants of Rabat is revealed by the saying that "A man from Rabat is worth two Jews"[12]. The men of Żebbuġ (Malta) are acknowledged to be merchants par excellence however, while those of Qormi